



U.S. Department of Justice

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**31 KOREAN NATIONALS ARRESTED THROUGHOUT THE NORTHEASTERN UNITED STATES IN
FEDERAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING CASE**

Michael J. Garcia, United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, **Roslynn R. Mauskopf**, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, **Julie L. Myers**, Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE"), and **Mark J. Mershon**, Assistant Director-in-Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), New York Field Office, announced that 31 individuals were arrested yesterday and charged in a wide-ranging human trafficking ring operating throughout the northeastern United States. The defendants have been charged by the United States Attorneys' Offices for the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York with crimes including conspiracy to engage in human trafficking, conspiracy to engage in interstate transportation of women for the purpose of prostitution and interstate transportation of women for the purpose of prostitution, conspiracy to transport illegal aliens and transportation of illegal aliens, and conspiracy to operate an unlicensed money transmitting business.¹ The defendants include brothel owners and managers, middlemen who worked as transporters and otherwise assisted the organization, and individuals involved in unlicensed money transmitting businesses.

According to complaints unsealed yesterday in Manhattan federal court and in Brooklyn federal court, the investigation began in approximately May 2005, when a Korean couple who owned and operated a chain of brothels in Queens, New York, attempted to bribe an undercover New York City Police Department ("NYPD") detective to protect their businesses from being raided by law enforcement. Working in an undercover capacity, the detective began accepting bribes from the couple. Between May 2005 and March 2006, the couple paid the undercover detective a total of \$126,500 in cash bribes. On March 8, 2006, the couple and two NYPD officers, who were discovered during the investigation to be accepting bribes, were arrested and charged with public corruption offenses. That prosecution is pending in federal district court in Brooklyn before U.S. District Judge Sandra L.

¹ The charges in the complaints are merely allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Townes.

The government then expanded its investigation and obtained a court-authorized wiretap on the telephone of TAE HOON KIM, also known as “Tae Won,” the Flushing-based middleman and transporter. The wiretap led to the discovery of an extensive network of Korean-owned brothels, stretching from Rhode Island to Washington, D.C.

According to the complaints, the trafficking process typically began when recruiters identified women in Korea who wanted to come to the United States, often to make money to support their families. The recruiters would then arrange for the transportation of the women to North America. In some cases, the recruiters provided the women with false immigration documents to enable them to enter the United States illegally. In other instances, the women were taken into the custody of handlers in Canada or Mexico and then smuggled into the United States.

The complaints allege that by the time the women arrived in the United States, they had incurred large financial debts, usually in the tens of thousands of dollars, to recruiters in Korea and other members of the defendants’ organization. Middlemen in the United States arranged for the women to be placed in one of the network’s numerous brothels and then transported the women to the brothels. In many cases, the brothels purported to be legal enterprises, such as massage parlors, health spas, and acupuncture clinics, but in fact generated the vast majority of their revenue through illegal prostitution.

Once the women were delivered to the brothels, they were placed under the supervision and custody of the brothel owner or manager, who frequently took possession of the women’s identification and travel documents, including passports, to restrict the ability of the women to leave. The complaints charge that the women then began working as prostitutes, typically with their earnings credited against their outstanding debts to the defendants. In some instances, the women were threatened or led to believe that if they left the prostitution business before paying off their debts, they would be turned over to United States law enforcement or immigration authorities, or that their families in Korea would be harmed.

The intercepted telephone conversations revealed that the women were routinely traded and exchanged between and among the various brothel owners and managers, sometimes as often as several times per month, until they worked off their original debts to the defendants. When a new worker was needed, the owner or manager simply placed a call to a middleman or transporter, who then located a woman who fit the brothel’s need and arranged for her transportation to the new brothel. In addition, the middlemen assisted the brothel owners in sending prostitution proceeds and other funds overseas through unlicensed Korean money transmitters.

United States Attorney **Garcia** stated, “This case is a reminder that large-scale human trafficking occurs every day, right in our own cities and neighborhoods. The United States government is dedicated to putting an end to this type of trafficking, and to punishing those who seek to profit from the sexual exploitation of others.”

“We will continue to employ all available resources to investigate and prosecute those who

would exploit vulnerable women for personal profit,” stated United States Attorney **Mauskopf**.

“This law enforcement operation successfully shut down an organization that cashed in human dignity for profit and greed,” said Assistant Secretary **Myers**. “ICE will continue to aggressively target the means, money and infrastructure of organizations that exploit individuals.”

FBI Assistant Director **Mershon** stated: “The prostitution business was multi-state and very lucrative. And the actions of these defendants, particularly with regard to the handling of the proceeds, show a clear effort to avoid detection. But the FBI and our partners in this investigation were far more coordinated and unified in our pursuit of the criminals.”

If convicted, the defendants face maximum sentences of five years’ imprisonment for the conspiracy charges, and up to ten years’ imprisonment for interstate transportation of women for the purpose of prostitution.

Mr. **Garcia** and Ms. **Mauskopf** praised the work of ICE and the FBI, as well as the NYPD, and thanked the United States Attorney’s Offices for the District of Rhode Island, the District of Connecticut, the Eastern and Middle Districts of Pennsylvania, the District of Delaware, the District of Maryland, the District of Washington, D.C., the Eastern District of Virginia, the Middle District of North Carolina, the Northern District of Georgia, the District of Kansas, the District of Colorado, and the Central District of California. Mr. **Garcia** and Ms. **Mauskopf** added that the investigation is continuing.

Assistant United States Attorneys Elie Honig and Jason P.W. Halperin are in charge of the prosecution in Manhattan. Assistant United States Attorney Pamela Chen and Trial Attorney Solette Magnelli of the Department of Justice’s Civil Rights Division are in charge of the prosecution in Brooklyn.

The Defendants:

Brothel Owners/Managers

Kyo Hwa Adler
DOB: 3/21/1953

Sun Im An
DOB: 1/15/1962

Ji Hyun Bang
DOB: 6/2/1976

Aeok Boydston, a/k/a “Big Sister Lillie”
DOB: 5/8/1957

Un Sun Brown
DOB: 6/27/1950

Eun Sook Chim
DOB: 5/14/55

Kim Chong, a/k/a "Big Sister Lora"
DOB: 5/20/1960 or 5/1/1960

Yong Chong, a/k/a "Ra Ra"
DOB: 12/16/1968

Sun Daneman
DOB: 10/15/1945

Chong Girouard
DOB: 8/28/1949

Chun Grandt, a/k/a "Texas Imo"
DOB: 2/5/1952

Mi Sun Hayes,
DOB: 9/27/1953

An Soon Kim
DOB: 8/2/1957

Hyang Ran Kim, a/k/a "Tina"
DOB: 6/7/1975

Hyea Kim, a/k/a "Patty Kim"
DOB: 1/15/1969 or 1/21/1969

Kyung Hwa Kim
DOB: 11/1/1971

Yong Hui Kim
DOB: Unknown

Jung Lim, a/k/a "Big Sister Miko"
DOB: Unknown

Kum Ok Lowery
DOB: 4/23/1953 or 4/28/1953

Myong Moon, a/k/a “Debbie”
DOB: 2/19/1960

Tae Young Oh
DOB: Unknown

Eun Ja Park
DOB: 10/6/1967

Mi Ja Park
DOB: 4/19/1965

Sung Su Plourde
DOB: 1/22/1952

Seng Hee Ryan
DOB: 6/30/1973

Myong Sa
DOB: 3/20/1942

Jae Shim
DOB: 2/27/1966, 2/27/1968 or 12/13/1960

Hyo Won Smith, a/k/a “Niko”
DOB: 12/20/1967

Tae Nam Thompson
DOB: 3/26/1950

Chong Weishaupt
DOB: 9/30/1953

Tae Young Oh
DOB: Unknown

Kyong Polachek, a/k/a “Ji-yeon Kim,” “Jennifer” and “Hana”
DOB: 3/29/1952

Middlemen/Transporters

Tae Hoon Kim, a/k/a “Tae Won”
DOB: 2/15/1967

Lim, Sung Chul, a/k/a “Sung Chul Il,” “Seong-cheol” and “Cheol-I”
DOB: 2/11/1967

Lee, Sung Ho, a/k/a “Seong Ho”
DOB: 10/10/1972

Tae Ho Choi, a/k/a “Tae Jun Park”
DOB: 12/20/1974

Do Hyup Bae, a/k/a “Do Hyeop”
DOB: 6/2/1969

Money Transmitters

Byoung Il Son, a/k/a “Mr. Son”
DOB: 9/15/1964

Jin Sook Kim Lee
DOB: 6/9/1975

Miae Choi-Son
DOB: 9/5/1964

Jong Tae Park
DOB: 2/7/1975

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